

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ABIDJAN 4918 ACTION SECSTATE USUN 13 MAY 77

QUOTE

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 4918

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IV, US, SF, XA
SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S VIEWS ON CURRENT SITUATION IN AFRICA

1. PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET BOIGNY RECEIVED AMBASSADOR YOUNG,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEELE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES
AND AMBASSADOR STEARNS THIS MORNING FOR MARATHON TWO-HOUR
MEETING FOLLOWED BY LUNCH. EARLIER IN MORNING SAME GROUP
MET FOR SHORTER COURTESY CALL WITH FOREIGN MINISTER USHER.
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WM HOUPHOUET, WHO SPOKE ALMOST WITHOUT INTERRUPTION FOR
ENTIRE DURATION OF MEETING, PAINTED A BROAD-BRUSH PICTURE
OF HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFRICA, DESCRIBING
THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE IVORY COAST AND HIS OWN
PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE TO HIGHLIGHT HIS
PRINCIPLE CONCLUSIONS THAT; SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFRICA
IS INCREASING; THE WEST MUST MAKE A GREATER EFFORT TO
COUNTER-BALANCE SOVIET INFLUENCE AND, IN SO DOING,
PROTECT THE IMPORTANT WESTERN STAKE IN AFRICA; THIS EFFORT
WOULD BE HARD BUT COULD BE SUCCESSFUL GIVEN EXISTING WESTERN

ASSETS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND BECAUSE THE FUNDAMENTAL COMPETITION WAS ECONOMIC, AN AREA WHERE THE WEST WAS STRONGER THAN THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES. EMPHASIZING HIS FAMILIAR BELIEF IN THE NEED FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS OF DIFFICULT PROBLEMS THROUGH DIALOGUE, HOUPHOUET APPROVED OF VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S SCHEDULED MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND INDICATED THAT HE WAS SEEKING TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH VORSTER EITHER IN THE IVORY COAST OR IN EUROPE AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER HAD MET WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT.

3. HOUPHOUET LAUNCHED INTO HIS PRESENTATION BY SAYING THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT SOUTHERN AFRICA WAS THE DOMINANT PROBLEM ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. AS LONG AS THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA CONTINUED TO DETERIORATE, IT WOULD COMPLICATE ALL OTHER AFRICAN PROBLEMS AND LEAD TO INCREASING SOVIET INFLUENCE OVER AFRICAN AFFAIRS. HOUPHOUET TRACED THE ORIGINS OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFRICA TO TWO BASIC MISTAKES MADE BY THE WEST. THE FIRST WAS US WITHDRAWAL IN 1956 OF OUR OFFER TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASWAN DAM, A MOVE WHICH, IN HOUPHOUET'S VIEW, PUSHED NASSER INTO THE ARMS OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CREATED AN OPENING FOR SOVIET ENTRY INTO AFRICA. THE SECOND MISTAKE WAS WESTERN FAILURE TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE PORTUGUESE TO ACCOMMODATE THEMSELVES TO ASPIRATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE IN THE PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES IN AFRICA. THE LATTER FAILURE HAD DEPRIVED THE WEST OF ANY REAL INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA AND OTHER LUSOPHONE
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AFRICAN STATES.

4. THE SOVIETS, SAID HOUPHOUET, DO NOT NEED AFRICAN RAW MATERIALS AS THE WEST DOES. SOVIETS SIMPLY WANT TO DENY THESE MATERIALS TO THE WEST AND TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN POLITICAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM ON AFRICA. SOVIETS DO NOT WISH PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. INDEED THEIR MAIN MOTIVATION IS TO OBSTRUCT SUCH SETTLEMENT. HOUPHOUET BELIEVED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SPLITS IN THE RANKS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONALISTS WHICH SO COMPLICATED EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA.

5. IN THE CASE OF RHODESIA, IT APPEARED TO MANY AFRICANS THAT A SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED ELSEWHERE WHEN IAN SMITH ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF MAJORITY RULE BUT, SAID HOUPHOUET, THE WEST HAD NOT COUNTED ON THE ABILITY OF THE SOVIETS TO MAKE COUNTER MOVES. THE SOVIETS HAD BROUGHT THEIR INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON THE FRONT-LINE STATES TO GIVE EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND TO ISOLATE SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA. THE PROSPECT FOR ACHIEVING MAJORITY RULE BY PEACEFUL MEANS HAD, HOUPHOUET BELIEVED, BEEN BADLY CLOUDED BY THIS DECISION OF THE FRONT-LINE STATES. A GREATER EFFORT WOULD NOW BE REQUIRED BY THE WEST TO GET NEGOTIATIONS STARTED AGAIN.

6. REGARDING NAMIBIA, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT PRESSURE MUST BE PLACED BOTH ON VORSTER AND ON SAM NJOMO OF SWAPO. HOUPHOUET RECALLED THAT HE HAD MET VORSTER ONCE BECAUSE OF HIS CONVICTION THAT THE BLACK AFRICAN STATES MUST BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND HAD BEEN HARSHLY CRITICIZED FOR DOING SO. HE WAS GLAD TO SEE THAT VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE WOULD BE MEETING WITH VORSTER THIS MONTH IN VIENNA AND HOUPHOUET HAD ALREADY ADVISED THE SOUTH AFRICANS OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET AGAIN WITH VORSTER, EITHER IN THE IVORY COAST OR IN EUROPE, SOMETIME AFTER VORSTER'S MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE SHARPLY ATTACKED, BUT HE BELIEVED THAT
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ONLY THROUGH DIRECT TALKS OF THIS KIND COULD VORSTER BE PERSUADED TO UNDERSTAND THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF ADOPTING A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION ON NAMIBIA. IN THIS CONNECTION, HOUPHOUET COMMENDED THE FIVE-POWER INITIATIVE AND SAID THAT HE WOULD BE KEENLY INTERESTED IN OBSERVING ITS PROGRESS.

7. TURNING TO SWAPO, HOUPHOUET RECALLED THAT HE HAD MET TWICE WITH NJOMO AND HAD ADVISED HIM TO BEGIN TALKING TO SWAPO'S INTERNAL WING. HOUPHOUET THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT FOR THE WEST TO SPEAK TO NJOMO IN THE SAME TERMS AND TO WARN HIM AGAINST THE DANGERS OF ASSOCIATING HIMSELF TOO CLOSELY WITH THE SOVIETS OR WITH "EXTREMIST REGIMES

8. SPEAKING OF THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF, HOUPHOUET EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL REVULSION AT THE SYSTEM OF APARTHEID BUT OBSERVED THAT, HOWEVER OBNOXIOUS IT WAS, IT WAS ESSENTIALLY AN INTERNAL SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM WHICH COULD NOT BE SOLVED FROM THE OUTSIDE. THERE WAS CERTAINLY NEED FOR STRONG AND CONSISTENT PRESSURE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME BUT THERE ALSO HAD TO BE COMMUNICATION. HOUPHOUET RECALLED THAT WHEN HE HAD SPOKEN WITH VORSTER, THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE FEARED THAT MAJORITY RULE IN SOUTH AFRICA WOULD RESULT IN THE BLACKS THROWING OUT THE WHITES. HOUPHOUET SAID THAT HE HAD COUNTERED BY CITING THE EXAMPLE OF THE IVORY COAST WHERE, UNDER BLACK RULE, THERE WERE MORE WHITES NOW THAN AT THE TIME OF INDEPENDENCE. SUMMING UP HIS VIEWS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA WERE PROBLEMS THAT HAD TO BE ADDRESSED EFFECTIVELY SOON. TIME WAS RUNNING OUT. CERTAINLY TIME WAS NOT REPEAT NOT ON THE SIDE OF THE WEST. THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF COULD NOT BE SOLVED IN THE SHORT TERM. SOUTH AFRICA WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO QUELL ANY ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT MAJORITY RULE BY FORCE OF ARMS. THERE WAS NOT ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION.

9. HOUPHOUET THEN SPOKE OF IVORIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE
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UNITED STATES. "WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS," HE SAID AND NOTED THAT THE IVORY COAST WAS CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES ON MANY ISSUES AND HAD PROVED THIS, OFTEN AT THE COST OF RECEIVING MUCH ABUSE, BY ITS VOTES AND STATEMENTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY. THE IVORY COAST RECOGNIZED THAT THE UNITED STATES BY VIRTUE OF ITS STRENGTH WAS THE LEADER OF THE WEST BUT, HE SAID, THE IVORIANS WERE AWARE THAT "THE SOVIETS CHASED YOU OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA." NOW THE SOVIETS WERE ESTABLISHED IN AFRICA. THE UNITED STATES HAD TO TAKE EFFECTIVE STEPS TO COUNTER-BALANCE THEIR INFLUENCE. HOUPHOUET RECALLED THAT WHEN THERE WAS A SOVIET DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN ABIDJAN THE SOVIETS HAD OFFERED HIM NOTHING CONSTRUCTIVE. THROUGHOUT AFRICA THEY DEALT IN ARMS, NOT IN ECONOMIC AID. HOUPHOUET HAD DISCOVERED THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN ABIDJAN HAD ATTEMPTED TO AGITATE IVORIAN STUDENTS TO OVERTHROW THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT. AFTER TWO YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY, HE HAD SUSPENDED RELATIONS BECAUSE HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD NOTHING POSITIVE TO OFFER. IT WAS UP TO OTHER AFRICAN STATES TO DECIDE IN LIGHT OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THEY WANTED RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT HOUPHOUET WAS CONVINCED THAT SOVIET ACTIVITIES WERE AS DESTRUCTIVE ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA AS THEY HAD BEEN IN THE IVORY COAST.

10. CONCLUDING HIS LENGTHY PRESENTATION, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT IVORIANS WELCOMED EAST-WEST DETENTE BUT HE THOUGHT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD GUARD AGAINST THE DANGER THAT THE SOVIETS INTERPRETED DETENTE DIFFERENTLY FROM THE WEST AND WERE CAPABLE OF EXPLOITING IT TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. IN AFRICA THE MAIN STRUGGLE WOULD BE ECONOMIC, NOT MILITARY. THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE HAD GREAT ADVANTAGES IN COMPETING WITH THE SOVIETS ECONOMICALLY IN AFRICA. THE UNITED STATES HAD PROVED THAT IT COULD OUT-PERFORM THE SOVIETS IN ALL SPHERES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY. AFRICANS HAD HAD MANY TIES OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE WITH THE WEST AND IN THE IVORY COAST AND SOME OTHER AFRICAN STATES, WESTERN ECONOMIC METHODS SERVED AS A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT.

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Q1. AT THIS POINT HOUPHOUET DIGRESSED TO SAY THAT THE IVORY COAST'S PRINCIPLE OBJECTIVES WERE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY PROUD OF THE FACT THAT UNITY WAS BEING FORGED IN A STATE COMPRISED OF SIXTY TRIBES AND SEVERAL TIMES THAT NUMBER OF DIALECTS. FURTHERMORE, ECONOMIC GROWTH IN IVORY COAST HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN AN ATMOSPHERE FREE OF REPRESSION. THERE WERE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS OR DETAINEES IN THE IVORY COAST AND NO ONE HAD BEEN EXECUTED THERE SINCE INDEPENDENCE. HOUPHOUET BELIEVED THAT EVEN AFTER HE PASSED FROM THE SCENE HIS SUCCESSORS WOULD FOLLOW HIS POLICIES OF GROWTH, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE.

12. RETURNING TO HIS MAIN THEME, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT DESPITE

ITS ADVANTAGES IN AFRICA, THE WEST COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE PASSIVE IN MEETING THE SOVIET CHALLENGE IN AFRICA. THE STAKES WERE HIGH EVEN THOUGH THE UNITED STATES COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT ACCESS TO AFRICAN RAW MATERIALS, EUROPE COULD NOT. IF AFRICA WERE CUT OFF FROM EUROPE, THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT SUPPLY EUROPE WITH ENOUGH RAW MATERIALS TO FILL THE GAP. THE RESULT WOULD BE A EUROPEAN ECONOMIC CRISIS OF GRAVE PROPORTIONS, AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD WIN POLITICAL CONTROL IN WESTERN EUROPE WITHOUT RESORTING TO ARMS. "HELP THE MODERATE AFRICAN STATES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE," SAID HOUPHOUET. AFRICAN PROSPERITY CREATES NEW MARKETS FOR WESTERN GOODS, AND IF THE MODERATES PROSPER, THE OTHER AFRICAN STATES WILL BE STRONGLY INDUCED TO FOLLOW MODERATE POLICIES THEMSELVE

13. AMBASSADOR YOUNG THANKED HOUPHOUET FOR EXPLAINING IVORIAN VIEWS IN SUCH DETAIL AND SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ENORMOUSLY IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN IN HIS SHORT VISIT TO THE IVORY COAST, PARTICULARLY ON HIS TRIP YESTERDAY MORNING TO THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHPLACE AT YAMOOUSSOUKRO. IVORIAN SUCCESS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WAS INSUFFICIENTLY KNOWN ABROAD. ON THE STRENGTH OF WHAT HE HAD SEEN, AMBASSADOR YOUNG THOUGHT THAT IT WAS MISLEADING TO CALL THE IVORY COAST A "MODERATE" STATE. IVORIAN
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ACHIEVEMENTS WERE REVOLUTIONARY AND THE IVORY COAST SHOULD SERVE AS A MODEL FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER AFRICAN STATES.

14. AMBASSADOR SCHAUFLE reviewed western efforts to keep the initiative in seeking peaceful settlement in Rhodesia and Namibia, and told Houphouet that we would keep the Ivorian government and Houphouet himself closely informed of developments in both areas. Assistant Secretary Maynes raised the ILO question and said that we would appreciate Ivorian support in correcting the abuses in ILO which, if they continued, would force the United States to withdraw from the organization. Houphouet said that the Ivory Coast entirely shared our opinion that specialized United Nations agencies like the ILO should stick to their fields of responsibility and avoid political bombast. It would be deplorable if the United States withdrew from the ILO and the Ivory Coast was prepared to work with us constructively to improve ILO performance.

15. Later at lunch Houphouet spoke briefly about Zaire, saying that he was encouraged to see that the military situation in Shaba seemed to be improving. During his official visit to Belgium last week, the Belgians had told him that they were strongly advising Mobutu to stop his military advance at the Angolan border and not repeat not to indulge in hot pursuit if the Katangan gendarmes withdrew beyond the frontier. Houphouet said that he had noted among some Belgians an indifference to the personal fate of Mobutu because of his political excesses. Houphouet had been asked how it was possible for the Ivory Coast to support Mobutu in view of his defects as a political leader.

HOUPHOUET HAD REPLIED THAT THE ISSUE IN SHABA TRANSCENDED PERSONALITIES. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MOBUTU, ZAIRE WOULD REMAIN. AFRICAN STATES COULD NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO VIOLATION OF RECOGNIZED FRONTIERS. HOUPHOUET QUESTIONED THE ACCURACY OF THE TERM "KATANGAN GENDARMES" TO DESCRIBE THE INVADING FORCES. BY HIS CALCULATIONS IF THESE WERE THE SAME GENDARMES WHO HAD LEFT ZAIRE IN 1963, THEY WOULD ALL BY THIS TIME BE IN THEIR FIFTIES. FURTHERMORE, THEY HAD CERTAINLY NOT RETURNED TO SHABA WITH THE SAME WEAPONS THAT THEY TOOK WITH
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THEM WHEN THEY LEFT. THE ISSUE, IN ANY CASE, WAS ONE OF PRINCIPLE AND NO AFRICAN STATE COULD AFFORD TO IGNORE IT.

16. COURTESY CALL EARLIER IN THE MORNING ON FOREIGN MINISTER USHER TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON MANY OF THE SAME THEMES DEVELOPED BY HOUPHOUET. USHER EMPHASIZED IN PARTICULAR THE DANGERS CREATED BY SPLITS AMONG THE NATIONALISTS IN ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA. ALL SUCH MOVEMENTS, HE SAID, HAVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WINGS AND, IN THE CASE OF NAMIBIA, THERE WAS A DANGER THAT THE INTERNAL WING WOULD ELIMINATE THE EXTERNAL ONE. AMBASSADOR YOUNG DESCRIBED THE UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT THAT HAD BEEN MADE TO ADVISE NJOMO OF THE RELATIVELY ENCOURAGING RESULTS OF THE FIVE-POWER DEMARCHE TO VORSTER AND USHER AGREED THAT SPLITS IN THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS TENDED TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE MOST INTRANSIGENT ELEMENTS OF THE MINORITY REGIMES.

STEARNS.

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER.

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